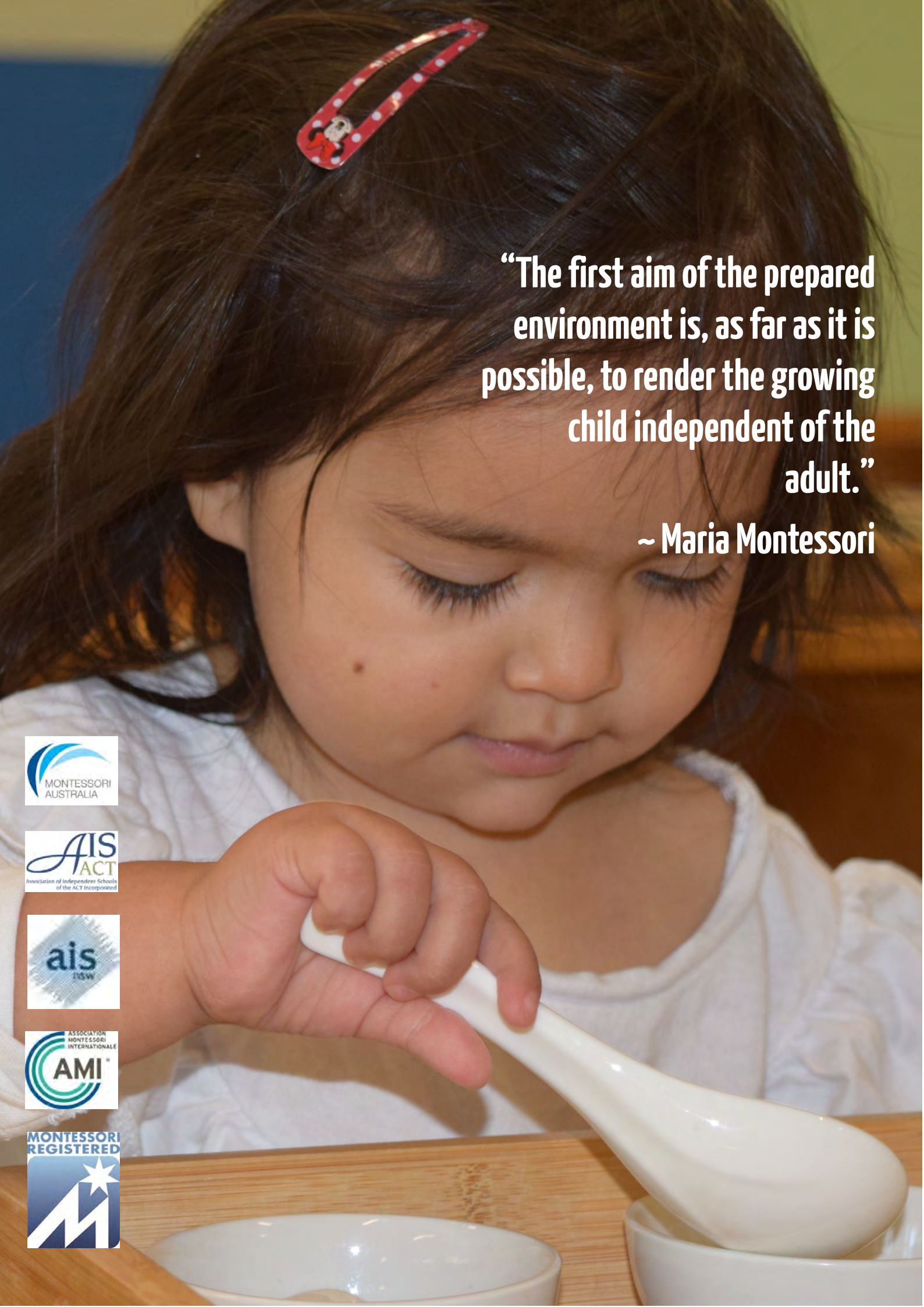




**CANBERRA
MONTESSORI**
SCHOOL

2019 ANNUAL REPORT





“The first aim of the prepared environment is, as far as it is possible, to render the growing child independent of the adult.”

~ Maria Montessori





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INTRODUCTION

The Montessori approach to education provides opportunity for young people to develop to their full potential in a positive, supportive environment encouraging independence, enquiry, and freedom to grow.

Our school reflects the ideals set in our classrooms - we value high standards and expectations, sharing of knowledge, lifelong learning, individuality, community spirit and respect. Collaborative relationships with parents are critical, and together we create a community centred on ensuring Montessori schooling fulfils its role as a recognised leader in individualised learning.

CMS caters for children from 18 months to twelve years of age. The Montessori curriculum is an integrated one where all aspects of a child's learning are presented as part of an interrelated whole. We implement the National Montessori Curriculum whilst adhering to the Australian Curriculum and complying with Montessori Quality Assurance Program expectations, ACECQA requirements and the Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.

This document addresses our accountability requirements, both educational and financial, as set out by the Commonwealth Government.

“We must help the child to act for himself, will for himself, think for himself; this is the art of those who aspire to serve the spirit.”

~ Maria Montessori



OUR VISION

'To continually extend the opportunity for every child to have a Montessori education that provides for them to develop to their full potential.'

OUR LOGO

Our logo uses various symbols representing the education provided by Canberra Montessori School, with icons illustrating Science, Life, Ideas and an Open Book. The logo was chosen to reflect the professional and up to date approach to education delivered by CMS whilst the primary colours and symbols also are reflective of an early learning environment.



Science



Life



Idea



Open Book



MESSAGE FROM SCHOOL BOARD

Dear Members

I am pleased to present the Annual Report for the Canberra Montessori School and would like to again thank all the School's staff for their tireless efforts throughout the year and the support they have provided to each other. I particularly would like to commend the Acting Principal, Rael Matthews, on his leadership in bringing the staff, parents and community together during the period of transition following Anthony Vandermolén's resignation as Principal.

There have been several highlights including the launch of the Snowgum early learning facility, the formal rollout of Transparent Classroom, improvements to the outdoor environment, and the development of a Parents & Friends Association. We have begun to address some of the School's financial challenges, though there is a long way to go.

The School seemed to have endless bad luck with the weather when planning community events and it was a difficult end of the year with the bushfires and poor air quality. Despite this, the community's spirit has been very much on display, especially at the breakfasts on the school grounds.

Whilst the School has been pleased to receive favourable feedback from parents throughout the year, I'll always believe that the best feedback the School can receive is seeing the children run down the footpath into the School grounds each morning. I look forward to an even brighter 2020.

Martin Drinkwater
CMS Board Chair, Canberra Montessori Society



Members of the Board

Martin Drinkwater—Chair
Tim Bourke
Samantha Scott



MESSAGE FROM PRINCIPAL

I have read that one's ability to handle life's challenges is a measure of strength of character. That strength is what I have seen demonstrated across our community through 2019. From a change in the school leadership in April, along with a restructure at board level, we have worked closely as a team, side by side, towards securing the future of Canberra Montessori School; we have made important progress.

Alongside working to ensure financial stability, and a focus on ensuring school sustainability, we place priority on the quality of teaching and learning, and improving student outcomes consistently over time; the results of which we won't see immediately, but I believe with the ongoing hard work of our diligent and dedicated staff team, we'll see steady growth and improvement.

The opening of Snowgum in May has made a positive impact across our community and also in diversifying our revenue. Snowgum has steadily filled to capacity through the year, with nearly 90% of children transitioning to Cycle 1 and with a healthy waiting list into the next two years already. This looks set to provide a solid foundation for CMS into the future.

We have been able to make other improvements across the school. We have installed a new digital telephone system, which will double as a lockdown alarm in the near future. We rolled Transparent Classroom out to all families, we engaged with Koomarri for support in the maintenance of our grounds, and also managed to repair the worst of the damage and potholes in the carpark. We finished the year by installing a fully sustainable watering system across the school, using recycled water.

A priority is to continue to develop an active and nurturing school community. I believe that small schools can thrive with this in place. I am genuinely excited that we now have our fledgling Parents and Friends' Association. This committed group of parents have some great ideas moving forward in working alongside the school, I can't wait to see how this develops.

Rael Matthews
Acting Principal, CMS





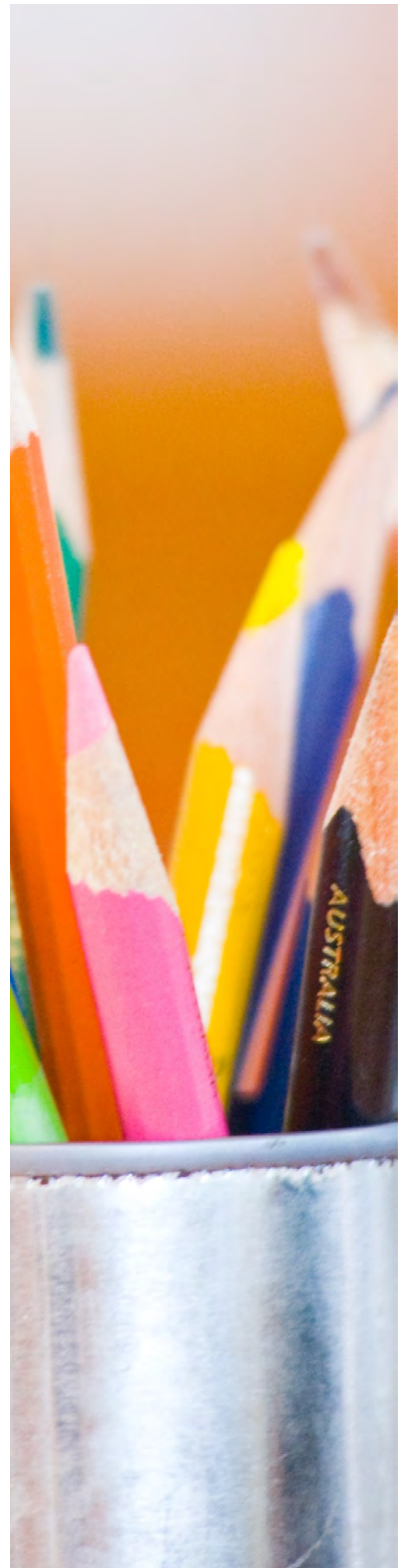
COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Effective communication between CMS administration, staff and parents is of prime importance and takes place on a continuous basis. Strong communication is essential in linking the home and school environments and in building a positive working relationship between the teacher and the parents.

Open communication begins before school even starts. Welcome letters are sent home, phone calls to parents are made, and frequent newsletters are emailed, all to develop ongoing lines of communication. Parents appreciate hearing how their children are settling in and progressing, and are also able to easily discuss any questions they may have. We aim for our communications to be clear, and any issues of concern or dissatisfaction are addressed in a formal manner as they arise, using our Communication Pathways to ensure they are dealt with effectively and by the most appropriate person, and aiming for positive outcomes to be achieved at all times.

A more recent strategy for effective parent-teacher communication and increasing its efficiency has been incorporating technology into the classroom through Transparent Classroom. This platform is primarily a platform to support teacher planning and observations, but is also used to build strong communications with parents about their child's everyday progress.

We have an annual parent survey undertaken, together with additional surveys following various school events and tours. The feedback is used to inform future development and areas of focus. Through 2019, the school leadership team and the Board have worked closely side by side to ensure all remain in touch with the feelings of the broader school community.



NAPLAN 2019

(National Assessment for Literacy & Numeracy)

In May of 2019, 3 Year Three and 5 Year Five children sat the NAPLAN tests. The nature of these tests is very different to any other work that a child in a Montessori school will experience.

At CMS there has been no preparatory work ahead of the NAPLAN week, and so, in most cases, the children will not have experienced these conditions before. As a school, and a philosophy, standardised testing isn't something that takes place. However, the tests are approached with respect, and the children give their best account of themselves.

In the recent past, the low numbers of children at CMS who sit NAPLAN each year means that our data is a statistically insignificant sample size when compared to other schools. This also creates potential for a wide variance in scores each year, as one or two children can severely affect the data.

As a part of ongoing work to improve the quality of teaching and learning at CMS, the test scores are reviewed to build a clearer picture of where each child is at on the learning journey. This can then be used formatively, alongside other measures, to inform future planning for progress.

Canberra Montessori School NAPLAN Data is available from the MySchools website <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/49991>



WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

Our staff team is composed of teachers, classroom assistants and members of administration. CMS has no indigenous or Torres Strait Islander staff members. All teaching staff have the required teaching qualifications and also have additional Montessori diplomas. All Snowgum staff have appropriate Early Children qualifications, some have or are working towards recognised Montessori qualifications, and all receive ongoing internal professional development.

In 2019 the School Leadership team consisted of the Principal, Business Manager, Director - Pedagogy, and Director - Early Education. These were supported by a small administrative team.

All staff are responsible to the Principal who has general operational and day to day management responsibility for the various activities of the school.

Our Staff

Administration

Rael Matthews - Acting Principal
Kate Luck - Business Manager
Judy McGowan
Tonia Lewis

Directors

Louise Draper
Leharne Fountain
Aileen Frost
Ros Hartley
Halima Khurram
Darcy Loughton
Tom Ransom
Paola Tonel
Glen Watson

Assistants

Veda Limaye
Viv Moir
Sukhi Sahota
Taryn Smith-Hardy
Stephanie Viegas

OHSC

Taryn Smith-Hardy
Kylie Hunter

Early Learning Centre

Lindsay O'Malley
Melanie Potter
Daniella Matarazzo
Rhianna Keys
Kylie Hunter



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2019

Alongside identifying school priorities, staff, as professionals, are asked to critically reflect on their own professional journeys and career aspirations. As a part of that process we can then plan professional learning opportunities to meet their needs, reflect on growth, and then plan for the future.

Within school, we hold weekly meetings with pedagogical discussion and, with a focus on whole school improvement, all staff undertake classroom observations, discussion of the needs of our students, with mentoring and coaching.

We have developed, with support from AMI trainers, an ongoing professional development program for classroom assistants which recognises the need for continual support and sharing of expertise.

CMS staff attended both the Montessori Australia Early Childhood Conference and the Refresher weekend in Sydney, creating opportunities for networking, gaining new professional knowledge and refining practices. They then shared knowledge and learning with the wider staff to improve practice across the school.

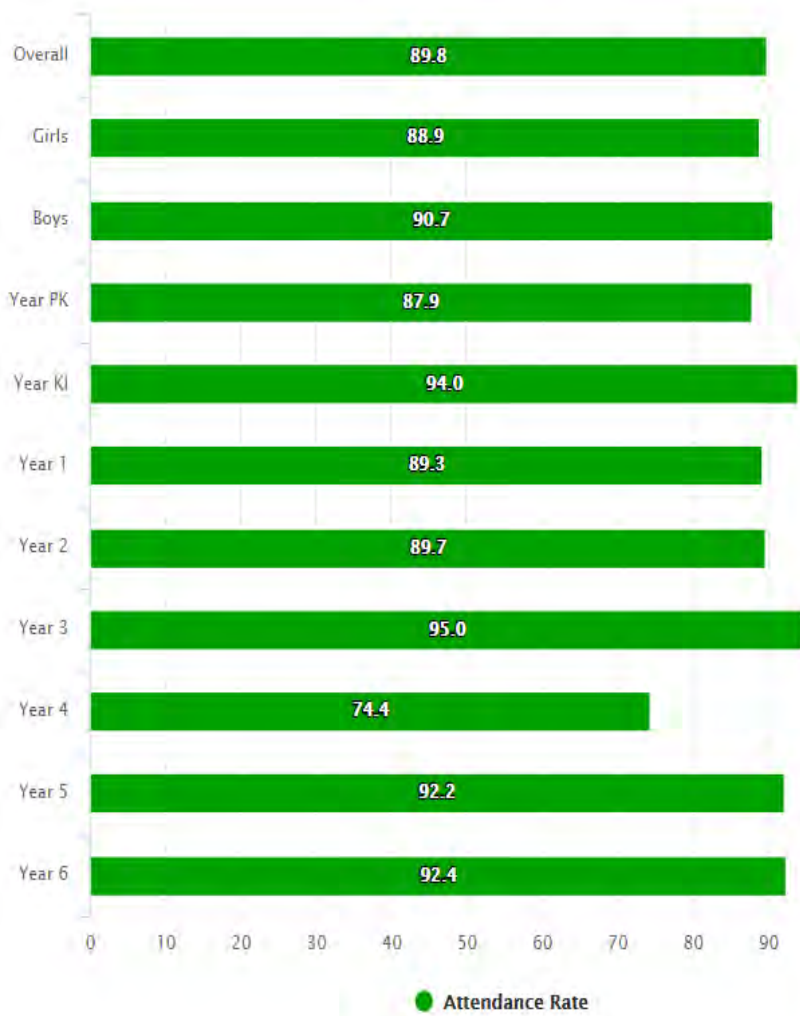
CMS is committed to supporting the on-going learning journey of all staff members to increase the depth and understanding of Montessori principles.

All directors are TQI registered and hold or are working towards appropriate Montessori qualifications. All assistants have a Certificate III in Early Childhood as a minimum requirement.



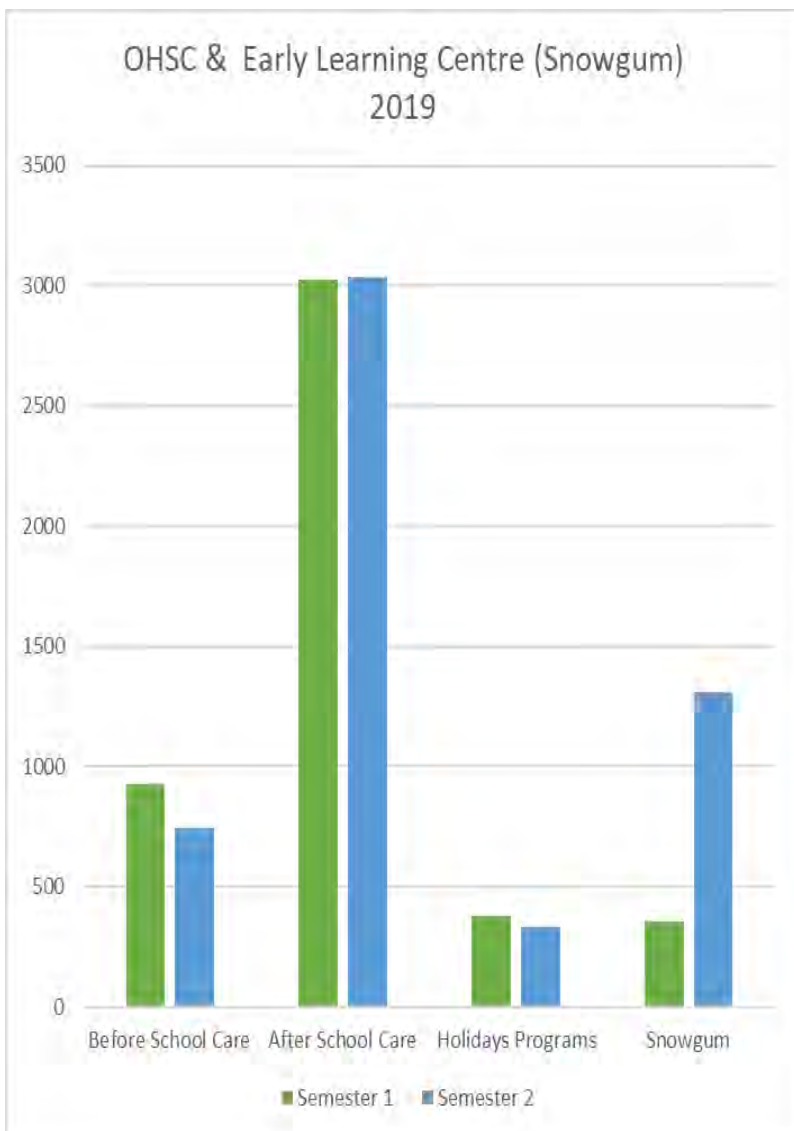
STUDENT ATTENDANCE 2019

Attendance Summary by Year





OUT OF HOURS SCHOOL CARE





STUDENT ADDITIONAL NEEDS

The very nature of the individualised educational journey in the Montessori classroom means that the majority of needs are met for every child. The didactic materials provide the control of error, allowing children to check and analyse their own work and problem solve, whilst also providing required stretch and challenge.

Repetition is a key of the 'Sensitive Period,' which Dr. Montessori characterised as a time when children are most likely and willing to learn a key skill or knowledge with ease. The morning uninterrupted work period allows the opportunity for the repetition of activities and for children to develop the concentration and self-discipline required for more advanced work. In addition, the Montessori materials are multi sensory, scientifically built learning tools that teach the children how to problem solve and self correct through this continued practice.

Whilst the child's environment provides the educational platform for success, it is important to acknowledge that there are that children have additional needs requiring additional support further to that which the classroom provides.

To ensure the absolute best for every child we have designed and are implementing a comprehensive Student Welfare and Learning support system. Through this, every child is regularly observed and discussed from a holistic perspective by Classroom Directors and the School's educational leadership. The outcome is, working closely with families, appropriate strategies and interventions can be implemented and then tracked to ensure that every child is making progress. Where necessary, this may include the creation of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), in liaison with all key stakeholders, to document individual needs and adjustments, and reportable outcomes.

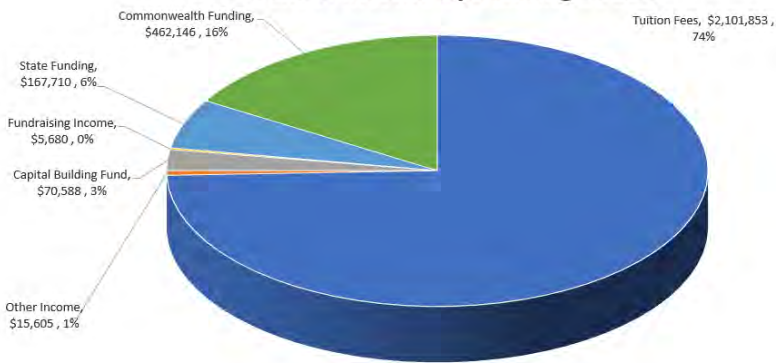
“The difference in the reaction between deficient and normal children, in the presentation of didactic material made of graded stimuli, is plainly seen from the fact that the same didactic material used with deficient makes education possible, while with normal children it provokes auto-education.”

~ Maria Montessori
The Montessori Method

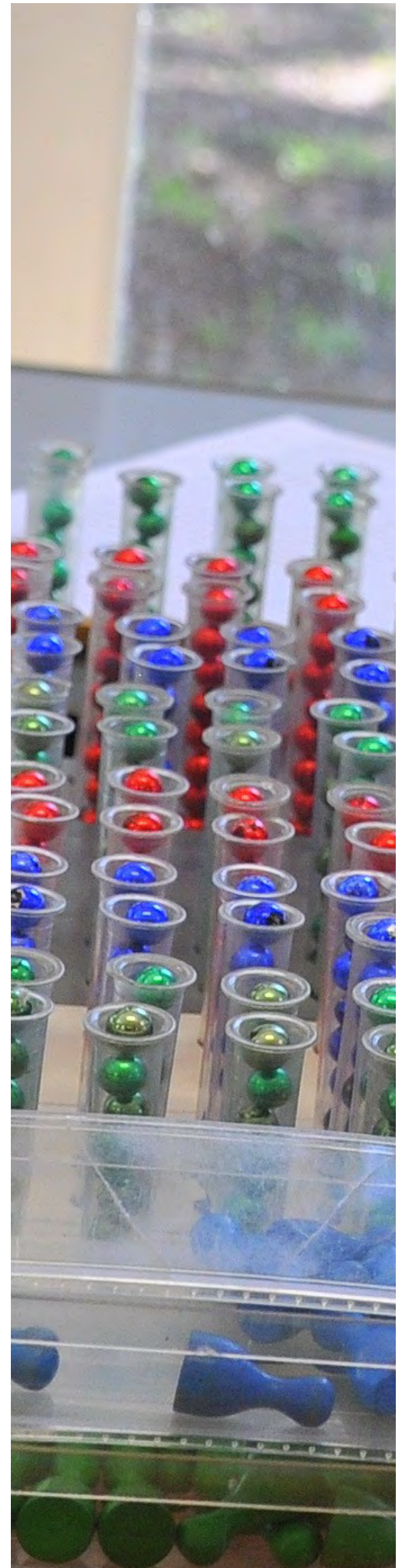
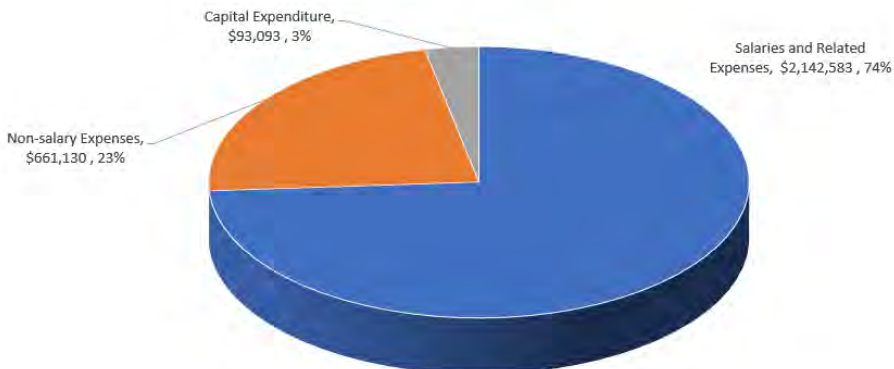


FINANCIAL INFORMATION

2019 School Income by Funding Source



2019 Recurrent/Capital Expenditure





COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP/ ENGAGEMENT

CMS is proud to continue its support of the Karinya House Home for Mothers and Babies by offering PTP places and a school place as supported by the Bursary Program and work alongside Catholic Care Counselling to support members of our community with counselling available when required.

The formation of our fledgling Parents and Friends' Association will support the school in building local community engagement moving forward, whilst we reach out to other Montessori schools across Australia to build links for students to connect and learn from each other.

